Work Assigned to the Staff of New Zonal Railways

2074. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the then Minister of Railways had set up seven new Zonal Railway Head Quarters in 1996, to coordinate the development work of the Railways in States;

(b) whether this involved setting up of an organisation of 1200 railways officers and staff, at a cost of Rs. 40 crore per year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no particular job has been assigned to these seven new Zonal Head Quarters; and

(d) if so, what are Government's views on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No., Sir, Only six new zonal Railway Headquarters were announced in 1996. Later on a seventh zone at Bilaspur was approved in 1998. The new zones have been proposed keeping in view the factors like size, workload, accessibility, traffic patterns and other operating/administrative requirements consistent with the needs of economy.

(b) The seven new zones were initially proposed to be set up with around 1000 officers and staff at the then cost of approximately Rs. 40 crores each for the first six zones and Rs. 100 crores for Bilaspur zone.

(c) No, Sir. Certain specific activities of one/two divisions have been taken over by the administration of new zones in addition to preliminary activities of land acquisition, offices, staff quarters, communication facilities, and other infrastructural requirements. Some Projects have also been allotted to new zones for study and implementation on zonal railways.

(d) Does not arise.

Railway Safety Fund

2075. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sanctioned, on a one time basis. Rs. 17000 crore for the Railway Safety Fund;

(b) whether this amount is to be spent on track renewals, modernisation of assets, strengthening of bridges, etc;

(c) whether 65 per cent to 70 per cent of rail accidents are attributed to human error: if so, whether this safety fund would also address to the human factor in rail accidents; and

(d) if so, what are Government's views on this?